



CCM Testimony

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 22, 2023

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 168 towns and cities.

HB 6662 An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Education

The Governor's budget recommends, among other things, retaining the current education finance obligation to towns and cities. The proposal would not make changes to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula, and continue the phase-in of increases for towns that are underfunded, while also ensuring that towns which are overfunded do not have their decreases accelerated. In addition, the proposal makes no changes to alliance districts, the Excess Cost Grant or other significant changes to education finance.

While CCM appreciates the Governor holding towns and cities harmless from cuts, given the state's strong financials, there is a unique opportunity to make enhanced investments in our education financing system. In particular, investments that would fully ECS formula using a student based approach, expand ECS weighted funding to students attending public schools of choice (such as magnet schools, charter schools, VoAg schools and Open Choice programs) while protecting funding for local public schools, and while maintaining the phase-out of funding for municipalities receiving reductions in their ECS grants. **HB 5003, rather than the Governor's proposal, would implement such changes.**

The current educational finance system is overly reliant on local property tax revenue. In the country, Connecticut is one of the state's most reliant on the local property tax to fund public education. The cost for public education in our state is over \$12.3 billion and municipal property taxpayers fund 53.3% of that amount (\$6.6 billion), with the State and federal governments providing the balance. As a result, our system does not consider the vast disparities of wealth and student needs. English Learners, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students navigating their educational system in communities that experience concentrated poverty, all deserve to be funded at a level that makes a real and tangible difference.

The current mechanism to provide education funding is inadequate and inequitable to meet the needs of Connecticut's student population. A particular drawback of the current system is that it fails to account for a student-based approach to improve the outcomes for all students. Resources and support have an impact on student outcome. In particular, increased class sizes,

fewer and paraprofessionals, lack of mental health support, and outdated instructional material negatively contribute to student needs

A greater emphasis and support for a student-based approach – as recommended in HB 5003 – will improve student outcomes. These outcomes can, among other things, result in higher test scores, higher earnings later in life, and promote additional years of educational completion. We need this investment to help our youth reach their full potential.

CCM urges the Committee to **make meaningful action on education finance, in lieu of the Governor's proposal, and support HB 5003.**

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If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, State and Federal Relations Manager of CCM at mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org or 203-500-7556.